

Syllabus

Course Title	Understanding China: From Its Media, Communication and Culture
	解读中国：从媒体、沟通、文化的视角
Teaching Staff	GONG Wenxiang
First day of classes	July 2, 2018
Last day of classes	July 13, 2018
Course Credit	3 credits
Course Description	
Objective:	
<p>This course is an advanced introduction to Modern China by a scholar of communication, culture and the media. The purpose is to discover how heavily our habits are influenced by the culture that has shaped us as members of Chinese society, and how our communication acts, both interpersonal and through old and new media, help us to maintain or transform the society, as well as the system, in which we live. In the lectures we will use concrete examples, such as daily events, rather than abstract theoretical propositions to illustrate our arguments and our thoughts on how people communicate, on what they try to achieve through their communications, and above all, on what the socio-political and cultural consequences would be. However, this is not meant to be a course devoted exclusively to China, and our classroom discussions will hopefully range much wider and take into account more comprehensive implications.</p>	
Pre-requisites /Target audience	
<p>College/university students from any discipline, with some knowledge of China and its history, who intend to have a closer look and deeper understanding of modern China, the society, and the people.</p>	
Proceeding of the Course	
<p>Participation and discussion constitute a central part in this course. Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to complete all required readings and to actively participate in class discussion. Absence without legitimate reasons will lead to deduction in scores for participation and discussion, and in extreme cases, may lead to a student’s failure in the course.</p> <p>Each student is expected to write a short memo (1-2 pages) which briefly summarizes and critiques required texts for a particular session. Memos and presentations will count toward scores in participation. The student should circulate the memo to other students and the instructor before class, and then make a 5-7 minute group presentation in class, which is followed by class discussion.</p>	

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Assignments (paper or other forms)

The Final paper will be a critical analysis of issues related to the course content (12 pages, double-spaced and typed with 12-point font) , a topic that is relevant for the central theme of this course, and that should focus on one or more specific issues or topics of this course.

The students should submit the final papers by **Aug. 8, 2018** (subject to change). No late submission will be accepted unless a legitimate reason is presented to the instructor at least three days in advance. If you have any question concerning how to pick up a topic and/or how to write paper(s), please consult with the instructor.

Evaluation Details

Three parts of the evaluation will be calculated as follows:

Participation and discussion	Presentation and critique	Final paper	
40% (Attendance+quiz+discussion)	20%	40%	

*Field trips are regarded as part of the whole course, and the attendance, performance and evaluation of the trips will add up to the final scores.

Texts

There are both *required* and *recommended* readings for each class. No book purchase needed. All the required texts (those highlighted in **bold**) will be available through PKU Summer School arrangements.

Academic Integrity (If necessary)

Participation in this class commits the students and instructor to abide by a general norm of equal opportunity and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the definition of plagiarism. Violations of the norm of academic integrity will be firmly dealt with.

Topics

Session 1

Peking University and Modern China: Modernization as a Collective Memory

Session 2

Story of Chinese Media: From Revolution to Evolution

Session 3

Food, Communication and the Chinese Culture

Session 4

Picturing China: The Interaction of Media and U.S.-China Relations

Session 5

Media Events and China's Image: the Case of Beijing Olympics

Session 6

Persuasion: How Intercultural Communication Fails
 Session 7
 The Chinese Way to Achieve Happiness

CLASS SCHEDULE
 (Subject to adjustment)

Session 1:
Peking University and Modern China: Modernization as a Collective Memory

Date:

【Description of the Session】
 (purpose, requirements, class and presentations scheduling, etc.)

The purpose and scope of this course as stated above.

Course requirements.

Class and presentations scheduling.

For this topic:

The founding of the first modern university, Peking University, was closely related to the first attempt to modernize China more than a hundred years ago after suffering from repeated defeats by foreign invaders. Peking University provides us a shortcut to understand modern Chinese history from that period to today's Chinese politics, society and culture. It is also a good example for how the history of modernization and revolution became our collective memory, and then how that memory influenced the generations since then.

【Questions】

- Why are you interested in this course?
- How was Peking University related to Chinese modern history?
- What do you think should be the role of Universities in modern society?
- How different is your school from Peking University?

【Readings, Websites or Video Clips】

Weston, Timothy (2004). Locating Beijing University in History (Introduction), pp 1-11. *The Power of Position*.

【Assignments for this session (if any)】

Session 2:
Story of Chinese Media: From Revolution to Evolution

Date:

【Description of the Session】
 (purpose, requirements, class and presentations scheduling, etc.)

Chinese media was for a long time regarded as the indispensable tool for revolutionary successes, yet since early 1990's the new policies changed entirely the media, which soon

became an important part of market economy, while still maintaining its political roles. The Chinese and the Romanian cases can serve here as samples for the analysis of the concept of “information sovereignty” initiated since early 1960’s.

【Questions】

- What a role did media play in Chinese revolution?
- Please explain the term “information sovereignty” that was a popular topic in 1960’s at conferences held by the United Nations.
- Is the concept of information sovereignty still valid in the Information Age of today?
- How do you describe the great changes in the development of the Chinese media? What are the problems for China’s media today?

【Readings, Websites or Video Clips】

Nordenstreng, Kaarle and Schiller, Herbert I. (1993) *Beyond National Sovereignty: International Communications in the 1990s*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation. (reading: Ch. 13. Territoriality and Intangibility: Transborder Data Flows and National Sovereignty. By Drake William J., 259-313, in this book.)

Gong, Wenxiang. (2005). Information Sovereignty Reviewed. *Intercultural Communication Studies, Volume XIII :4.2005*.

Zhao, Yuezhi. (2008). Introduction, 1-18. *Communication in China: Political Economy, Power, and Conflict*.

【Assignments for this session (if any)】

Session 3:	Date
Food, Communication and the Chinese Culture	

【Description of the Session】

(purpose, requirements, class and presentations scheduling, etc.)

While examining Chinese food as a culture, you understand that food is not just food. Chinese began from thousands of years ago the “centripetal” rather than the “separated” style of eating, and ancient philosophers believed that “rites (礼)” began when we found ways to divide food among men. With analysis of several Chinese characters such as 炮 (pao) , 饗 (xiang) , 鼎 (ding) , etc., we see how our food, cuisine and the habit of dining evolved together with the development of Chinese civilization. Since the right beginning food has become the indispensable medium for communication, and it is said that you cannot know the Chinese well without knowing how to eat with them. You can also find the cores of Chinese philosophy from Chinese food culture.

【Questions】

- The characteristics of Chinese food and way of eating.
- Relationship between Chinese food and its culture.
- How does food culture influence the way Chinese communicate?

【Readings, Websites or Video Clips】

Chen, Zishan (2005), ed. Preface, 5-9; Yutang Lin, 9-17; Mianzun Xia, 23-29; Liaoyi Wang, 36-40. in *Food and Chinese Culture: Essays on Popular Cuisines*. San Francisco: Long River Press.

Gong, Wenxiang. (1989). Legacy of Confucian Culture in Maoist China. <i>THE SOCIAL SCIENCE JOURNAL</i>, Vol. 4. Connecticut, Western Social Science Association.	
【Assignments for this session (if any)】	
Session 4: Picturing China: The Interaction of Media and U.S.-China Relations	Date
【Description of the Session】 (purpose, requirements, class and presentations scheduling, etc.)	
Two cases, Edgar Snow's <i>Red Star Over China</i> , and the <i>Time</i> Magazine coverage of China, are used to study how media performed the role to help construct images of political leaders and the states, and consequently to influence decision making and international relations.	
【Questions】	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Who is this Snow? ➤ Why has Time been interested in China? ➤ If media communication really has a role in influencing international relations, why and how is the role played? 	
【Readings, Websites or Video Clips】	
<p style="text-align: center;">Gong, Wenxiang. Picturing China in the American Press (book review). <i>International Journal of Communication</i>, Vol. 2, (2008). On-line publication. University of Southern California.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Perlmutter, David D. (Jan. 2007) <i>Picturing China in the American Press: The Visual Portrayal of Sino-American Relations in Time Magazine, 1949-1973</i>. Lexington Books. ISBN 073911820X, 9780739118207.</p>	
【Assignments for this session (if any)】	
Session 5: Media Events and China's Image: the Case of Beijing Olympics	Date
【Description of the Session】 (purpose, requirements, class and presentations scheduling, etc.)	
To apply and extend the theory of <i>Media Events</i> proposed by Dayan and Katz to examine the case of 2008 Beijing Olympics, when China tried to present a positive state image to the whole world. Emphasis is laid on the role of new media, and how the masses of internet and cell phone users changed the way public opinions were formed, and state image construction was performed by multiple actors and factors..	
【Questions】	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is media events according to the authors of that book? ➤ What are the differences between traditional and new media events? ➤ How do you think the 2008 Olympic Games was designed to influence the image of China? ➤ Can state image be designed and effectively constructed by the state? 	
【Readings, Websites or Video Clips】	
<p style="text-align: center;">Dayan, Daniel and Katz, Elihu. (1992). Preface. vii. Ch. 1. 1-24. <i>Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History</i>. Harvard University Press.</p>	

Wu, Xu. (2007). Ch. 11-12, 147-161. *Chinese Cyber Nationalism: Evolution, Characteristics, and Implications (Paperback), Lexington Books.*

Larson, Charles U. (2007). Ch. 11. The Persuasive Campaign or Movement. 243-265. Ch. 13. Modern Media and Persuasion. 287-307. *Persuasion: Reception and Responsibility*. 11th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Scotton, James F. and Hachten, William A. ed. (2010) Ch. 1. 2008: New Challenges to China's Media, 11-18; Ch. 3. Impact of New Media. 28-42. *New Media for a New China*. Wiley-Blackwell. Introduction.

【Assignments for this session (if any)】

Session 6:

Date

Persuasion: How Intercultural Communication Fails

【Description of the Session】

(purpose, requirements, class and presentations scheduling, etc.)

Persuasive communication, especially the intercultural communication is the major theme. Instead of interpreting the techniques for winning success, this topic addresses the errors we made in persuading across cultures. Learning from failure is a common way for human beings to gain skills, and the error analysis perspectives can enable us to obtain visions for theory development.

【Questions】

- What is persuasion? Please try to define it with your own words.
- What are the five cultural dimensions proposed by Prof. Geert Hofstede? Can they be applied to analysis of your own culture?
- Are stereotypes dangerous?
- What is the difficult part for intercultural communication?
- Can you define failure in intercultural communication activities?

【Readings, Websites or Video Clips】

Hofstede, Geert. (2001). From the Preface to the First Edition (1980); Preface to the 2nd edition; Summary of the book. Xv-xx. Ch. 1, 1-40. Ch. 10, 461-466; Appendix 5 (Summary of Country Index Scores, including additions) 500-502. *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations, 2nd edition, London: Sage Publications.*

Gong, W. (1998). The Role of Ethics in Persuasive Communication—A Comparative Study of Aristotle's 'Ethos' and the Confucian 'Correctness of Names'. In *Communication and Culture: China and the World Entering the 21 Century*, co-edited by Wenxiang Gong W. & Heisey, Ray. Rodopi Editions, Amsterdam.

Han, Fei. The Difficulties of Persuasion. In *Han Fei Tzu: Basic Writings*. Tr. Watson, Burton. New York: Columbia University Press. 1964. 73-79. (Also the Chinese text.)

Pratkanis, Anthony and Elliot, Aronson. Revised edition (2001) Ch. 12. The Credible Communicator. 121-127. Ch. 14. How Do You Persuade If Everyone Knows You Are Untrustworthy, Unbelievable, and Disliked? 132-139. Ch. 15. *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*. New York: W. H. Freeman & Company.

Larson, Charles U. (2007). Ch. 1. Persuasion in Today's Changing World. 5-24. Ch. 9. Cultural Premises in Persuasion. 198-220. <i>Persuasion: Reception and Responsibility</i> . 11 th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.	
【Assignments for this session (if any)】	
Session 7: The Chinese Way to Achieve Happiness	Date
【Description of the Session】 (purpose, requirements, class and presentations scheduling, etc.)	
Is happiness subjective or objective? Since happiness has been the ultimate goal for people of any time in any culture, it is often the key to understanding cultures. This topic will address issues regarding happiness in China, including the role of the media, and how ordinary people try to find their own sense of happiness in daily life. The common strategies are often rooted in the beliefs and thoughts handed down from ancient times.	
【Questions】	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Is happiness subjective or objective? Why? ➤ Is happiness a Reality or an Illusion? ➤ What is the media's role in making people feel happy in China? ➤ What do you think are the major cultural strategies for the Chinese to achieve happiness? 	
【Readings, Websites or Video Clips】	
<p>E. Diener (2009). Subjective Well-Being. In <i>The Science of Well-Being: The Collected Works of Ed Diener</i>, Social Indicators Research Series 37, DOI 10.1007/978-90-481-2350-6 2, Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2009. pp11-38.</p> <p>Laozi. <i>Tao Teh Ching</i> (道德经). Ch. 58. (Also the Chinese text.)</p> <p>Huainanzi. <i>Huainanzi</i>. Chapter 18, Lessons in Life. (Also the Chinese text.)</p> <p>Mao. <i>Quotations from Chairman Mao</i>. Beijing, PLA Soldiers Press. 1968. p. 190. (Also the Chinese text.)</p>	
【Assignments for this session (if any)】	