Course Description:

This course aims to offer an overview of some contemporary anthropological research on East Asia, with a focus on a set of broad topics (money, mobilities, developments, media).

In designing this course, I had two guiding assumptions:

1) *That you are not, for the most part, aiming to become professional academic anthropologists*. Rather, many of you aim to be academic professionals in other fields, policy wonks/practitioners of one sort or another, etc. Although I believe this course will still be of interest to future professional anthropologists, certain design choices reflect this assumption. I do not, for example, assume that you have all done ethnography, or are about to.

2) *That some knowledge of anthropological perspectives is nonetheless useful to those in other fields*. There are “anthropologies of” many topics, only some of which are explored in this course. Of media consumption and production, of circulation, of watching films and reading books. Of policy, of the inside of bureaucratic organizations, of political movements. Of citizenship, of consumption, of “modernity,” of middle (and lower, and upper) classes in Asia and elsewhere. Of history and memory (there is also historical anthropology), of the nonhuman, of death, of the self. I could go on. In other words, no matter what you do, there is likely to be an “anthropology of” something relevant.

What characterizes “the anthropological approach” to these varied topics? Some would say ethnography as a method, but what ethnography means is, itself, subject to different interpretations. There is, perhaps, a loose set of anthropological gambits or commitments that you will see repeatedly. There is a commitment to sociality, certainly—texts, policies, etc. that other disciplines “read” are produced and exist in social spaces. More recently, certain other concerns have come into focus: materiality, affect, and transnationality, to name a few. At a broader level, most anthropologists tend to believe that “theory” exists to be made and remade; it is not simply a toolkit, timeless and there for the taking.
Incidentally, I could have included some contemporary (Agamben, Rose, Latour, Berlant, to name a few) or classical (Durkheim, Weber, Marx, Foucault, Bourdieu, to name a few) theoretical touchstone readings. I didn’t, preferring rather to focus on the “midrange theory” of “anthropologies of” various topics. But you should feel free to address such theoretical touchstones, should you wish, in your assignments.

**Assignments and Grading:**

There are five assignments for this course, basically divided into two groups or clusters, plus a (significant) overall participation grade. The first cluster relates to one of the book readings for the course. The second cluster is modeled after the weeks in which we do article readings.

Note that the character and scope of assignments may be modified, depending on how many students ultimately are in the course. I will make use of plus/minus grading.

(First cluster):

A) *Presentation/lead class discussion* (10%): For one of the weeks in which class focuses on a *book-length reading* (there are eight, see below), begin the class with a fifteen-minute overview of the book, and then take charge of leading class discussion (posing new topics or questions when discussion flags, highlighting issues or questions, etc.) You should expect to be in charge for at least half of a given class session.

B) *Evaluation of book* (5-7 pages; 15%): One week after your book presentation you should hand in a 5-7 page evaluation of that same book. Please avoid the sort of book review in which you summarize the contents of each chapter in order (although I should note that many professional reviews are of this sort). Nor is the question of whether the book succeeds or fails in some up or down fashion (let alone whether you “like” it) ultimately the most important; successful books are those that fail interestingly. Rather, consider questions of the following sort:

- how does the book situate itself theoretically with respect to a given topic? are there alternatives that the author considers and dismisses, or fails to consider? how would you place it?
- how does the author, as a researcher, situate him or herself, and what angle on a given topic (e.g., film reception) or theoretical concern (e.g., neoliberalism) results?
- what sort of projects does the book open or authorize? how, as a graduate student, would you use it?

Note that in some cases, it might not be a bad idea to glance briefly beyond the book, in order to set it in context.

(Second cluster):
C) Choose a selection of anthropological readings (at least partially so) on some topic of choice, a k a, “design your own syllabus unit” (10%): In the last three weeks of the course, students will lead classes on topics of their choice, with each student teaching a 60-90 minute session. The first step is to pick a selection of article or book chapter-length readings, perhaps two to three overall, and supply pdfs (which I will put online). You should select your readings by October 22.

You can choose a topic that does not appear on the syllabus (advertising, aging, the nonhuman, etc.) or one that does, though in the latter case you should pick different articles than those already assigned. In any case, the topic you choose should be a theoretical concern, not simply a place (e.g., Korea or China) or a thing. For this reason, you may or may not find readings about East Asia to be the most relevant!

Your readings can be drawn from anthropology or can place some anthropological perspective(s) into interdisciplinary dialogue. Overall, your goal should be to provide readings that, individually or in concert, show different angles on a topic. Note that “review of literature” articles, such as those in the Annual Review of Anthropology (of which I have made great use) can be really useful.

Talk to me if you are having trouble.

D) Lead a half (or third) of a class session on your topic of choice (10%): This will happen in the last three weeks of the course. You should expect other students to have done the readings you have selected.

E) Final written assignment (15-20 pp. or so; 35%): Building on your topic in C and D, present a larger, structured, review article on some particular topic in anthropology. I expect that you will consider 10-15 sources overall. Note that the articles from the Annual Review are good models; note also that they are not “neutral,” but have points of view. As you might.

The goal of this assignment is to allow you to develop your knowledge of the “anthropology of X” toward comprehensive exam reading lists, the “review of literature” module in your M.A. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation, etc.

Alternatively, you may present a research paper, but consult me if you wish to do this. I would hope for some engagement with anthropology.

(Clusterless):

F) General class participation (20%). Attendance included, obviously. Let me know if you’ll be gone for some reason.

Academic dishonesty (plagiarism) will, of course, not be tolerated. This should go without saying.
Books:

The following books are on order for this course at the Coop and are otherwise widely available. I will put them on reserve at PCL as well. Other readings (articles) will be on Canvas (under the Files tab).

Miyazaki, Hirokazu, *Arbitraging Japan*
Osburg, John, *Anxious Wealth*
Freeman, Caren, *Making and Faking Kinship*
Chu, Julie, *Cosmologies of Credit*
Choy, Tim, *Ecologies of Comparison*
Sterling, Marvin, *Babylon East*
Joo, Rachel Miyung, *Transnational Sport*
Condry, Ian, *The Soul of Anime*

University Boilerplate:

University Notices and Policies

University of Texas Honor Code
The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students
Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at [http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php](http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php).

Documented Disability Statement
The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you require special accommodations, you will need to obtain a letter that documents your disability from Services for Studies with Disabilities. Present the letter to me at the beginning of the semester so we can discuss the accommodations you need. No later than five business days before an exam, you should remind me of any testing accommodations you will need. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or [www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd](http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd).

Religious Holidays
By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)
If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit [http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal](http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal).

Emergency Evacuation Policy
Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire...
alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:
Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building. If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

**Schedule:**

_Situating the Anthropology of East Asia (in Anthropology and in Area Studies)_

27 August (No presentations this class)


**Money**

3 September


10 September


**Mobilities**

17 September

24 September


Developments

1 October


8 October


Media:

...Music

15 October


...Sports
22 October


***Teaching modules due***

...Photography

29 October (*We will likely need to reschedule this class—I’ll be away*)


...Gaming

5 November


Golub, Alex and Kate Lingley, “‘Just Like the Qing Empire’ Internet Addiction, MMOGs, and Moral Crisis in Contemporary China,” *Games and Culture* 3(1):59-75 (2008).


...Anime

12 November

19 November

**Student-led class(es) 1 or TBD**

26 November (*The night before Thanksgiving. Should we reschedule, or no?*)

**Student-led class(es) 2 or TBD**

3 December

**Student-led class(es) 3 or TBD**