

21G.038/21G.194 China in the News: The Untold Stories (Subject meets with 21G.194)

Time: MW 3:30-5:00
Classroom: 14N-313
Instructor: Professor Jing Wang
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Office: 14N-311, Global Studies & Languages
Office Hours: By appointment
Stellar site: <http://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/21G/sp18/21G.038/>

Required Texts

Tom Doctoroff, What Do Chinese Want?

Jing Wang, Reconsidering the 2006 MIT Visualizing Cultures Controversy, Duke University Press, 2015.

Jing Wang, “Activism 2.0: The Other Digital China,” book manuscript (**e-reserve**).

Jeffrey Wasserstrom, China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know, Oxford University Press. 2010, 2013.

Xeroxed articles on the Stellar site

Films

The Gate of Heavenly Peace (1995)

The American Dream in China (2013)

Design of Death (2012)

Swordsman II (1992)

Shaolin Temple (1982)

Field trips to Boston Common AMC for recent Chinese films

Course Description

This CI-H subject examines the hottest issues and debates crucial to our understanding of contemporary Chinese society, culture, and politics of the post-Mao era. The discussion of “cultural politics” foregrounds the importance of “framing” in knowledge production. How was/is China framed in the US and foreign mass media and by China scholars in the West will be the guiding question that coheres different subjects to be addressed in this class. How is our knowledge about contemporary China constructed? Through which frame is it being constructed? Topics include the Beijing Olympics Games, Mao in post-Mao China; the new patriotism and the Visualizing Culture’s Debate at MIT; leisure culture and consumer culture; the rise of the Internet and web culture in urban China and its impact on activism; media censorship, remix, and creative culture online. At the heart of those controversies is the debate over “progress” and the role played by the state, the market, and citizen activists in engineering social changes. At the end of the semester, you should have gained a clear understanding of the complexities of the framing of China in Western media and in North American academic scholarship about China. Documentaries and feature films will be used to illustrate the cultural, social, and political changes that have taken place in China since the 1980s.

This is a HASS CI course. The amount of writing required is 5,000 words or more. Two short papers plus a final paper are required. Students will have the opportunity to revise one paper. Students' oral communications skills will also be developed through student presentations, class debates, and student-led discussions with feedback from the professor. Separate grades will be given for the paper and the revised paper. Both grades will count towards the final grade. Instructors will determine the weighting of the grades.

Requirement

1. Bi-weekly submissions of 2 essay questions (at least one question for each reading/documentary) to the subject's Stellar site. Those questions are **due before 10AM every Monday and Wednesday**. Late submissions will not count toward the grade. *Factual questions will not be accepted*. Those questions have to reflect your critical thinking on **EACH** assigned reading for each session. At the end of the semester, you are required to revise and submit all your essay questions.

2. Papers: Polished, double-spaced, Word Document, **electronic delivery**. Originality is the key to getting a good grade.

i. 1st paper: **due 3/7 (Monday)**, 1200 words. This paper asks students to rewrite an article we discussed in class by setting the article in an ideological frame of your own choice.

ii. 2nd paper: due **4/11 (Monday)**. "The China I Never Knew." 1430 words approximately, double-spaced, font 12. This paper will be revised and resubmitted.

3. Students will be assigned short oral presentations throughout the semester.

4. A final presentation and final paper **due on the last day of class (May 17, Thursday)**. The final paper should be 2,370 words minimum. A topic should be chosen in consultation with the professor. Content of the paper should include: (i) your discussion of the topic; (ii) an annotated bibliography (a combination of a book and articles) on the subject matter; (iii) raise two critical questions addressing the chosen topic. Those questions should also reflect your understanding of the major topics covered and discussed in class; (iv) answer at least one of the questions you raised.

Grade Distribution

Class discussion & oral presentations	25%
Weekly Email Questions & the final consolidated document	25%
1 st and 2 nd Papers	35%
Final Paper & Presentation	15%

WRITING HELP

MIT's Writing and Communication Center (WCC) give free advice about all types of writing and oral communication.

MIT HUMANITIES FILM OFFICE:

You will need to access the Plex.tv server for films required for this class. For login details, please see the class Stellar site.

Syllabus

- 2/7 W** The 'China' Constructed in Western Media: from the 1940s to 2008
How Was China Framed in Western Media?
- 2/12 M Faming Mao**
1. Watch A Century of Revolution: Part I (1911-1949) at home and raise two framing questions; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5cl0GjPjy4>
2. Restless China: Jeremy Brown, "When Things Go Wrong: Accidents and the Legacy of the Mao Era in Today's China," 11-35 (**e-reserve**)
- 2/14 W** 1. Watch "The Long March (1934-35)"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zHtKLff6NI>
2. Jeremie Barne, "The Irresistible Fall and Rise of Chairman Mao," 3-23 (**e-reserve**)
- 2/19 M** President's Day, no class.
- 2/20 T** 1. Watch Part II of "a century of revolution" and raise two framing questions
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgpKv-xXgf8>
2. Wasserstrom, "Revolutions and Revolutionaries," China in the 21st Century, 41-71.
- 2/21 W** 1. Watch documentary "China's Century of Humiliation,"
<http://mit.kanopystreaming.com/video/chinas-century-humiliation>
2. Julie Lowell, "The Opium War and China's Century of Humiliation," Demystifying China, 153-160 (**e-reserve**)
- 2/26 M US-China Intercultural Miscommunication**
1. Weston, Timothy and Lionel M. Jensen, "Introduction: China, the United States, and Convulsive Cooperation," 1-25 (**e-reserve**)
2. Watch film "The American Dream in China"
- 2/28 W** 1. Jeffrey Wasserstrom, "Big Bad China and the Good Chinese: An American Fairy Tale," (**e-reserve**)
2. Wasserstrom, "US-China Misunderstandings," China in the 21st Century, 113-125
In Class
Jing shows Zhang Yimou's Opening of the Ceremony
Jing shows the London Olympics China campaign

- 3/5 M** 1. "Nationalism and the Torch," China in 2008, 68-87 (**e-reserve**)
 2. Alex Pasternack, "Beijing's Olympic Weather: Haze, Blue Skies, and Hot Air," China in 2008, 187-192 (**e-reserve**)
 3. Daniel Beekman, "Beijing Soundscape: Volunteerism, Internationalism, Heroism, and Patriotism at the 2008 Games, 192-199 (**e-reserve**)
- 3/7 W Chinese Culture**
First Paper due
 1. Schools of Thought, Wasserstrom, China in the 21st Century, 3-22.
 2. Watch Guan Hu, "Design of Death"
- 3/12 M** 1. Tom Doctoroff, "The Chinese Worldview," What Chinese Want? 3-35 (**e-reserve**)
 2. "Ports, Pipelines, and Geopolitics: China's New Silk Road is a challenge for Washington" (**e-reserve**)
 3. Ming Ding & Jie Xu, "Face," The Chinese Way, 11-14. (**e-reserve**)
 4. Tim Barrett, "Confucius, The Key to Understanding China," Demystifying China, 41-46 (**e-reserve**)
- 3/14 W Tiananmen Square Crackdown**
 1. Ming Ding & Jie Xu, "Harmonious Society," *ibid.*, 51-55 (**e-reserve**)
 2. Student presentations on "River Crab"
In Class
 Watch Carma Hinton's "Gate of Heavenly Peace: Part I"
- 3/19 M** 1. Watch "Gate of Heavenly Peace: Part II"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0lgc4fWkWI>
 2. "Who are the Chinese dissidents now? "Who is Liu Xiaobo?" China in the 21st Century, 93-97.
- 3/21 W No class**
 Read and post questions on Stellar
 1. Jing Wang & Winnie Wong, Introduction, "Reconsidering the MIT Visualizing Cultures Controversy," 1-14
 2. Peter Perdue, an open letter to MIT Chinese students (**e-reserve**)
- 3/26, 3/28 Spring break**
- 4/2 M Discuss** 1. Jing Wang & Winnie Wong, Introduction, "Reconsidering the MIT Visualizing Cultures Controversy," 1-14; 2. Peter Perdue, an open letter to MIT Chinese students
 1. In response to Peter Perdue's letter (**e-reserve**)
 2. Qin Shao, "American Academic Freedom and Chinese Nationalism"
- 4/4 W** 1. Winnie Wong, "Lantern Slide Moments and the Taught Subject"

		2. Jack Qiu, “Go, Baobao! Image-Driven Nationalism, Generation of post-1980s and Mainland Students in Hong Kong,”
4/9	M	1. Jing Wang, “Reframing the VC Controversy,” 2. Student presentation on William Callahan, “Textualizing Cultures”
4/11	W	No class, professor attending a conference 2nd Paper due
4/16	M	Patriot’s Day, no class
4/18	W	Activism in China 1. Jing Wang, “Nonconfrontational Activism and the Chinese Social” (e-reserve) 2. Jing Wang, “NGO2.0 and Social Media Praxis” (e-reserve)
4/23	M	Yongnian Zheng, <i>Technological Empowerment</i>, 166-187. (e-reserve)
4/25	W	Jing Wang, Chapter on activism 2.0 (e-reserve) Student presentations on Diana Fu, “Disguised Collective Action in China”
4/30	M	Political Humor 1. Watch Ai Weiwei’s stuff 2. Student presentation on <i>caonima</i> and other dissidents’ events, etc.
5/2	W	Martial Arts 1. Watch film “Swordsman II” 2. Egret Zhou, “Dongfang bubai, Online Fandom, and the Gender Politics of a Legendary Queer Icon in Post-Mao China,” <u>Boys’ Love, Cosplay, and Androgenous Idols</u> , 111-124 (e-reserve)
5/7	M	1. Stanley E. Henning, “Chinese Martial Arts,” <u>Demystifying China</u> , 89-97 (e-reserve) 2. Watch “Shaolin Temple” (1982)
5/9	W	1. Jerusha McCormack & John G. Blair, “Western Questions, Chinese Responses,” <u>Thinking through China</u> , 213-238 (e-reserve) . 2. Wasserstrom, “The Future,” <u>China in the 21st Century</u> , 127-148.
5/14	M	Final paper presentations
5/16	W	Final paper presentations

