Chinese Women’s Studies

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Course Description:
In an era of modernization and globalization, contemporary Chinese women are experiencing rapid changes in every aspect of their lives. Yet, the heritages of the revolutionary era and the influences of traditional Chinese culture cannot simply be written off in their lives. Therefore, for all Chinese women, this is an era of change and continuity as well. The intertwining forces of traditions, revolutions, the state, and the market have been shaping the private and public spheres for Chinese women.

This course covers major topics and issues about Chinese women. It first introduces the history of women’s movement and the recent development of feminism in China. Then the change and continuity of women’s sexuality, identity, marriage, and family of Chinese women throughout the 20th century are discussed, paying special attention to the impacts of the socialist revolution and the market transition. Furthermore, the course discusses gender divisions of labor in urban and rural China and the experience of rural-to-urban women migrants in the reform era in order to capture (at least partially) the change and continuity of some Chinese women’s lives under the impacts (or lack of) of development, modernization, urbanization, and globalization. At the end of course, the issues on women’s body and violence against women are discussed.

Readings:
All the required readings are available electronically in Dropbox. Please check the link below:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7bh8w4wnzj2qw80/AACnwVf9ZwlGHudayoVvxQLXa?dl=0

Course Objectives:
The goal of this course is to help the students to develop a basic understanding of Chinese women’s status, to explore the underlying social, economic, political and cultural factors that have been shaping Chinese women’s life experiences, and to learn how some characteristics of women’s sexuality, identity, marriage, family, and work have been maintained, whilst gradual or even radical changes have taken place in contemporary China.

Course Requirements:
The final grade will consist of four components: class participation and discussion, a reflective writing, a creative writing, and a research project.

Class Participation and Discussion (20%)
The course will follow a lecture-discussion format. Students are expected to attend all classes. To make sure that all students come to class prepared to discuss, students are
required to submit one-page summary and comment on the assigned readings by Tuesday noon each week.

*Reflective Writing (25%)*
For the reflective writing (5-page long, double spaced), the students are expected to observe the Chinese society with gender perspectives and record your personal reactions, feelings, and thoughts toward the facts you observed. Please reflect on the meaning of the observation to YOU, especially for your better understanding of gender relations and women’s situations in China.

*Creative Writing (25%)*
The students are required to write a fictitious story (5-page long, double-spaced) to reflect Chinese women’s experiences in a rapidly changing society. Please take full advantage of the class readings so that the story is based on the reality and represents the complexities of women’s daily lives in contemporary China.

*Research Project (30%)*
For the research project, the students are allowed to choose any topic that is related to Chinese women or gender issues in China and agreed upon with the instructor. Students are expected to develop their own ideas about the selected topic in the project and write a completed paper (10-page long, double-spaced). In addition, each student will present her/his research project to the class at the end of the semester.

**Course Policies:**
Cheating, or engaging in any form of academic dishonesty will be dealt with maximum punishment under university policies. The use of websites or library materials without proper citation is considered academic dishonesty.

Necessary accommodations will be made for any documented physical or learning disability. Please inform the instructor by the first day of class.

**Course Calendar:**

**Week 1: Overview**
*Readings:*

*Film:*
George, Peter and Christopher McCullough, 2006, *China Unbound: A Woman’s Place*, National Geographic Video.

**Week 2: Women’s Movement and Feminism**
*Readings:*
Yang, Mayfair, 1999, “From Gender Erasure to Gender Difference: State Feminism, Consumer Sexuality, and Women’s Public Sphere in China,” pp. 35-67 in Mayfair
Mei-hui Yang (ed.), *Spaces of Their Own: Women’s Public Sphere in Transnational China*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.


**Film:**

**Week 3: Women and Sexuality**

**Readings:**


**Week 4: Women and Identity**

**Readings:**


Week 5: Fall Break

Week 6: Women and Marriage

******The reflective writing is due. ******

Readings:


Film:
Chinese-Style Divorce, (in Chinese, without English subtitles)

Week 7: Women and Work

Readings:


Week 8: Women and Development
Readings:


Week 9: Women and Migration
Readings:


Film:

Week 10: Women and the Family Planning Policies
Readings:


Film:

**Week 11: Violence against Women**

*The creative writing is due.*

Readings:


**Week 12: Project Presentation**

**Week 13: Final Exam Week**

*The research project is due.*