

**GCIN2031.**

## **Reinventing tradition: Cultural production in contemporary China**

### **Course Instructor:**

Dr. Shubo Zhao(shubo@hku.hk)

**Consultation hour:** by appointment

**Lectures:** Wednesday, 2:30 pm - 4:20 pm, CPD-LG.59

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### **Course Description**

The course aims to examine how tradition is being reinvented, represented, reproduced and received in the process of cultural production in contemporary China. The course focuses on examining how the emergence and development of the cultural and creative industries in China have been underpinned by the emphasis on the notion of 'Chinese traditional culture'. The course will be divided into three parts. In the first part, it examines the discourse on Chinese traditional culture in relation to the geopolitics of China. In the second part, the course investigates the changing role of cultural tradition in relation to the emergence of the discourses on the cultural and creative industries and on soft power in China. It focuses on explaining how different forms of traditional cultures such as tea, martial arts, Chinese opera, Chinese medicine and other crafts and arts have undergone rapid marketization and industrialization in the last two decades. In the final part, the course illustrates the process of how traditional cultures have been branded and marketed as cultural products in China by comparing different real-life case studies.

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### **Learning Objectives**

On successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- 1) Explain reinvented-traditions as constructions of the processes of history penetrate people's lives and contribute to the evolution and diversification of human civilization in contemporary China;
  - 2) Describe the changing role of cultural tradition in relation to the emergence of the discourses on the cultural and creative industries and on soft power in China;
  - 3) Grasp the two main approaches— the continuity of time (chuan) and the expansion of space (tong)—to the study of traditions;
  - 4) Understand the process of commercialization of tradition in contemporary China;
  - 5) Examine how traditional cultures have been branded as cultural products in China.
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### **Teaching Methods**

## Assessment

### A. Essay (60%)

The written assignment consists of an essay of around 2500 words in length. You are asked to describe and analyze one kind of cultural production from reinventing tradition in contemporary China (for example: Chinese-style costume, furniture, movie, or food).

You should concern your findings with a theoretical analysis which makes use of the course lectures and reading materials. Key elements that should be included are: which kind of cultural production; Introduction of this kind of cultural production; Relationship with traditional Chinese culture; Analysis of the cultural elements; The possibility of innovation. Everything should be handed in as a hard copy to the office of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures (5th Floor, Run Run Shaw Tower), and as a soft copy on Moodle by 5pm on **29 May 2020 (Friday)**.

### B. Short written assignment (40%)

At the end of this semester, you will be asked to write a proposal for “Inventing A Holiday” in Mainland China, Tai wan, or Hong Kong. This assignment will consist of around 1200 words. Everything should be handed in as a hard copy to the office of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures (5th Floor, Run Run Shaw Tower), and as a soft copy on Moodle by 5pm on **29 May 2020 (Friday)**.

Here’s how to organize your proposal:

- Introduction - What is your general idea?
- Context - why do this now?
- Interpretations – What is the relationship with Chinese traditions?
- Holiday design - How to celebrate the holiday?

Further details of the assessment will be discussed in class.

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## Tentative Course Outline<sup>1</sup>

### Lecture 1: Course introduction and overview of reinventing tradition (5/2/2020)

#### Reading

- Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, eds. (1983). *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp1-14.

### Lecture 2: Chinese traditional culture in relation to the geopolitics of China (12/2/2020)

#### Reading

- Chongji Jin (2013). “On the Fate of Traditional Culture in Modern China”. *Social Sciences in China*, Vol.34(2), 2013, pp.152-164.
- Oakes Tim (2000). “China's provincial identities: Reviving regionalism and reinventing ‘Chineseness’ ”. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Ann Arbor Vol. 59, Iss. 3, 2000, pp.667-692.

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<sup>1</sup> The tentative schedule is subject to change.

### Lecture 3: Cultural Production of Eating and drinking(4/3/2020)

#### Reading

- Robin Fox (2003). "Food and Eating: An Anthropological Perspective". Social Issues Research Centre, <http://sirc.org/publik/foxfood.pdf>.
- Guansheng Ma (2015). "Food, eating behavior, and culture in Chinese society". Journal of Ethnic Foods, Volume 2, Issue 4, 2015, pp.195-199.

### Lecture 4: Cultural Production of Chinese Architecture(11/3/2020)

#### Reading

- Charlie Q.L. Xue (2006). Building A Revolution: Chinese Architecture Since 1980. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp.2-48.

### Lecture 5: Cultural Production of Traditional Culture Education(18/3/2020)

#### Reading

- George L. Israel (2017). "Wang Yangming in Beijing, 1510–1512: 'If I do not awaken others, who will do so'". Journal of Chinese History vol. 1, no. 1, 2017, pp. 59-91.
- Anlan Li (2017). "TV industry shifts focus to originality, values". Shanghai Daily, 17 June 2017. <https://archive.shine.cn/feature/TV-industry-shifts-focus-to-originality-values/shdaily.shtml>.

### Lecture 6: Chinese Traditional Medicine and Popular Religion(25/3/2020)

#### Reading

- Christopher Zaslowski, Myeong Soo Lee (2012). "International standardization of East Asian Medicine: The Quest for Modernization." In Volker Scheid, Hugh MacPherson (Eds.), Integrating East Asian Medicines into Modern Health Care. New York: Elsevier, 2011. pp. 123-138.
- Ka-ming Wu (2015). Reinventing Chinese Tradition: The Cultural Politics of Late Socialism. Urbana Champaign: University of Illinois Press, pp. 122-146.

### Lecture 7: Cultural Production of Dating and Marriage(1/4/2020)

#### Reading

- Wang Pan (2017). "Inventing traditions: television dating shows in the People's Republic of China". Media, Culture & Society, Vol.39(4), 2017, pp.504-519.

### Lecture 8: Family Values and Corporate Culture(8/4/2020)

#### Reading

- Heung Wah Wong, Karin Ling-Fung Chau (2019). Tradition and Transformation in a Chinese Family Business, London: Routledge.
- Chen Chen, Huawen Shen, Daisy X.F Fan (2015). "Hai Di Lao Hot Pot: From Employee Stimulation to Service Innovation". Journal of China Tourism Research, Vol.11(3), 2015, pp.337-348.

### Lecture 9: Case I: The Palace Museum (15/4/2020)

#### Reading

- Juiche Tu, Lixia Liu, Yang Cui (2019). "A Study on Consumers' Preferences for the Palace Museum's Cultural and Creative Products from the Perspective of Cultural Sustainability". Sustainability, MDPI, Open Access Journal, vol. 11(13), 2019, pp.1-23.

#### Lecture 10: Case II: Peony Pavilion (22/4/2020)

##### Reading

- Daphne P. Lei (2011). Alternative Chinese Opera in the Age of Globalization: Performing Zero. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.98-141.

#### Lecture 11: Case III: Square Dance(29/4/2020)

##### Reading

- Junxi Qian, Yanheng Lu (2019). "On the trail of comparative urbanism: Square dance and public space in China". Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Vol.44(4), 2019, pp.692-706.

#### Lecture 12: Case IV: WeChat Red Envelope (6/5/2020)

##### Reading

- Qian Zhang, Jun Li, Shanyong Wang, Yu Zhou (2018). "Understanding the user's economical and psychological intentions to snatch electronic red envelopes: An Experimental Study". I IEEE Access 7: 5749-5759 (2019).

#### Lecture 13: Case V: Kung Fu Hustle and Kung Fu Panda(13/5/2020)

##### Reading

- Jing Yang (2018). "Martial Arts Fantasies in a Globalized Age: Kung Fu Hustle and Kung Fu Panda". In Magnan-Park, AHJ, Marchetti, G & Tan, SK (Eds.), The Palgrave Handbook of Asian Cinema, London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.375-390.